

We have excluded most other inside matter this week to make room for the speech of Hon. J. S. Morrill, of this district, delivered in the House of Representatives last week. We should have occupied a portion of our outside space with it, but it was not received in season, and being desirous of giving it to our readers as early as possible, and as Mr. Lincoln's Inaugural address will be upon us next week, we believe we have chosen the best course.

With regard to Mr. Morrill's speech, it needs no comment from us, even if we had the space. While it is conciliatory in tone, it is firm in Republican principles, and will be received with general satisfaction by his constituents at home.

Attempted Assassination.

Mr. Van Wyck, a republican member of Congress from New York, was attacked by three ruffians on Thursday night of last week. He was stabbed twice with a heavy knife, first in the breast, but was saved from harm by a memorandum book in his pocket. The other blow he warded off with his hand which was cut severely. Mr. Van Wyck made a vigorous resistance during which he knocked down one of the ruffians, and in turn was himself knocked down with a cudgel by the third rascal, but recovering, he drew his pistol and shot at one of his assailants, and thinks the shot took effect, as the party immediately retreated. He then went to his hotel in a weak but not dangerous condition. It is greatly to be regretted that he could not have killed all three of the assassins on the spot.

Mr. Van Wyck speaks straight cut on the slavery question and secession, has received many letters threatening his life, and there is no doubt that this was the occasion of the murderous attack. What a beautiful government we live under! We wish most sincerely that the prospect was more encouraging that we would finally get rid of the entire slave holding part of this Union.

Mr. Lincoln, in Washington—Plot to Assassinate him.

The tour of the President elect was suddenly brought to a close on Friday last, by the timely discovery of a plot to kill Mr. Lincoln. The deed was to have been done either before he arrived at Baltimore, or in that city according to circumstance. We copy the following from the New-York Times:

"Abraham Lincoln, the President elect of the United States, is safe in the capital of the nation. By the admirable arrangement of General Scott, the country has been spared the last disgrace, which would have been fastened indelibly upon it had Mr. Lincoln been murdered upon his journey thither as he would have been had he followed the program as announced in the papers, and gone by the Northern central railroad to Baltimore.

"On Thursday night after he had retired, Mr. Lincoln was aroused and informed that a stranger desired to see him on a matter of life and death. He declined to admit him unless he gave his name, which he at once did. Such prestige did the name carry that while Mr. Lincoln was yet undressed he granted an interview to the caller. A prolonged conversation elicited the fact that an organized body of men had determined that Mr. Lincoln should not be inaugurated, and that he should never leave the city of Baltimore alive, if indeed, he ever entered it. The list of names of the conspirators presented a most astonishing array of persons high in southern confidence, and some whose fame is not to this country alone. Statesmen laid the plan, bankers endorsed it, and adventurers were to carry it into effect. As they understood Mr. Lincoln, was to leave Harrisburg at nine o'clock this morning by special train, and the idea was, if possible, to throw the cars from the road at some point where they could rush down a steep embankment and destroy in a moment the lives of all on board. In case of the failure of this project, their plan was to surround the carriage on the way from depot to depot in Baltimore and assassinate him with dagger or pistol shot. So authentic was the source from which the information was obtained, that Mr. Lincoln, after consulting with his friends, was compelled to make arrangements which would enable him to subvert the plans of his enemies. Mr. Lincoln did not want to yield, and Col. Sumner, actually eried with indignation; but Mrs. Lincoln, seconded by Mr. Judd and Mr. Lincoln's original informant, insisted upon it, and at 9 o'clock Mr. Lincoln left on a special train. He wore a Scotch plaid cap and a very long military cloak, so that he was entirely unrecognizable. Accompanied by Superintendent Lewis and one friend, he started, while all the town, with the exception of Mrs. Lincoln, Col. Sumner, Mr. Judd, and two reporters, who were sworn to secrecy, supposed him to be asleep. The telegraph wires were put beyond the reach of any one who might desire to use them. At 1 o'clock the fact was whispered from one to another, and it soon became the theme of most excited conversation.

No Peace.—The peace conference, Tuesday, voted down Mr. Franklin's substitute. Things are therefore in the same position as a week ago. Some southern commissioners are much discouraged, but a little comforted by assurances from those of other sections, that they will endeavor, on Wednesday, to reconcile the conflicting views in respect to slavery.

The Plot to Kill Mr. Lincoln.—Senator Seward's son met Mr. Lincoln in Harrisburg, on Friday, with a message from Messrs. Seward, Scott, and Holt. This message announced the formation of a conspiracy to take the life of the President elect, which was confirmed by a Philadelphia police detective, who had obtained some knowledge of the facts of the case. They urged Mr. Lincoln to anticipate this conspiracy by a sudden and secret journey to Washington, and after considerable discussion he reluctantly consented. He was not disguised with a cap and cloak as has been asserted. In this respect the story is untrue.

The Rutland Courier is out again to have the republicans nominate Frederick Holbrook for governor. We will ask the same question we did before, viz: if Mr. Holbrook is nominated, will the Courier support him?

New Hampshire.—Benning W. Jenness, the Breckinridge democratic candidate for governor of New Hampshire, has withdrawn from the canvass, and so also has Robert Morrison, who was nominated for Congress. The opposition are concentrating their forces for a desperate struggle.

Mr. Lincoln's Doings and Peruses. The president elect visited the Senate and House on Monday afternoon, in company with Mr. Seward. Considerable stir was occasioned; many members crowded around to welcome him, especially in the House. He remained but a few minutes, and afterwards visited the justices of the supreme court in their constitution room.

Mr. Breckinridge called on Mr. Lincoln Sunday evening. Gen. Cass called Monday morning, in company with Mr. Seward, and paid his respects to the president elect. The veteran wept when speaking of the condition of the country.

After Mr. Cass withdrew, Mr. Lincoln was closeted with Mr. Seward. While they were thus occupied, Horace Greeley called to see the new president, and was answered that he could not have killed all three of the assassins on the spot.

Mr. Lincoln moves freely about at Wilkes Hotel, and was in the parlor for some time Sunday night conversing freely with all. Two policemen are stationed in the hall near the door of his apartments, as is always the case when distinguished visitors are at the hotel. No guards are posted, and no danger is apprehended.

Another Attempt upon Mr. Lincoln's Life.—The Syracuse Journal makes this statement:—
"We have been informed by gentlemen connected with the party of Mr. Lincoln since he left home for Washington, that there were several attempts to take his life made during the journey through Indiana and Ohio. The one which threatened the most serious consequences took place on the presidential train leaving Cincinnati, when a grenade of the most destructive character was discovered in the car occupied by Mr. Lincoln, his family and personal friends. It was found in a small carpet bag, which had been deposited in a seat of the car by some unknown person. Attention was drawn to it from the fact that no baggage was allowed in the cars. On examination the grenade concealed in the carpet bag was discovered to be ignited, and so arranged that within fifteen minutes it would have exploded with a force sufficient to have demolished the car and destroyed the lives of all persons in it. Of course the 'infernal machine' was speedily removed and properly disposed of."

Gen. Scott is quietly receiving information from all the army stations in the Union, which will enable him to select the proper officers and men for emergencies or important positions. The troops he has assembled at Washington, and the officers who command them, had been privately tested, unknown to themselves, before being summoned to the national capital; and the fact that not a single resignation or mutinous act is recorded, shows with what accuracy the movements were managed.

A letter from Abbeville, Ala., states that Mr. A. Smith agent of Scott & Mead, druggists in New Orleans, was hung by the mob there on the Saturday before. He was a native of New Hampshire, and his offense consisted in calling Toombs a traitor and the secessionists thieves and robbers, which was too true to be submitted to. The vigilantes took his horse and buggy and \$356 in money.

The Albany Evening Journal gives returns of the New York town meetings, showing that, in fourteen towns, 171 republican and 68 democratic supervisors have been elected—a gain of four to the republicans over last year. New York is not greatly frightened by secession.

Some dozen applications for patents have been made by citizens of states which have seceded, and in every instance they make oath that they are citizens of the United States.

A Charlestonian writes to his friend in Boston that he is really for the Union, though obliged by fear of confiscation to countenance and aid the secession movement. His closing paragraph is:—"Mark my word—South Carolina will be back in the Union before Lincoln has been one year president."

A Minnesota justice of the peace, having been newly appointed and rather verdant in his duties, did not know how to perform the marriage ceremony for a young and interesting couple, so that he and they were satisfied it would hold. The young man said he was satisfied that it would hold until the morning, when if there was anything lacking, it could be supplied by another justice. To this the lady demurred, and refused to leave for home until she was sure that she was legally married. The young man pleaded, the justice guessed they

would find it all right," but she was firm, and the husband had to start off several miles for another justice. An experienced functionary being at last procured, the knot was legally tied and no mistake, and the happy couple departed with no misgivings.

STATE OF THE UNION.
Speech of Hon. J. S. Morrill, OF VERMONT, IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, February, 18, 1861.

Mr. Speaker: It is useless to disguise, and tedious to reiterate the gravity of the occasion. Against the Government established by Washington, a rebellion, formidable in its proportions and portentous in its results, is even now buckling on its armor, and with vigorous diplomacy courting allies. I am painfully aware how vain for me would be the attempt to stay this downward revolution; and, if I cannot arrest it, I will do nothing to accelerate its execrable speed. I do not underestimate the martial spirit of the South; and those who imagine there is nothing to be dreaded by the Union that assembles the North in arms, know little of the fire that now lies concealed in northern veins. Let but a single gun be fired in this capital, to use the words of one of my correspondents, "and there would not be men enough left at home in the North to milk the cows." It is growing too evident that in each section of our country the war-dogs only need to be let loose to cut the Gordian knot we have so long unsuccessfully struggled to untie. Expectant heroes, the cavaliers and the roundheads already stand on tip-toe to vindicate their respective claims; on one side the eagerness to commence, and on the other the reluctance to have off, a fratricidal war. He that does not pause ere he sears the pages of history with such a contest, is a madman. It is not because I doubt the mettle of my own people that I pause, but because I know their pluck. Therefore, not until all hope of the Union shall pass away, will I whet the edge of animosities by initiating the bad example of some gentlemen in sending forth the war-whop, instead of sober arguments and reasonable conclusions.

Recognizing the fact that there appeared to be no organized plan to revolutionize and break up the Government, a conspiracy to blot out the Declaration of Independence and subvert the Constitution, I voted in favor of raising the committee of thirty-three, when it was proposed, in order to give those who represented that portion of our country least in their complaints an opportunity to be heard to the utmost latitude; and not because any real grievance was visible to me—always expecting that some men were about to go out of office, and others were about to come in. I would consider the complaints of a single individual; and could not, therefore, reject unheard those of whole States. The Representatives from the disaffected section were each our equals, and respectable in numbers, and therefore, if they proposed it, entitled to the right of being heard. I do not regret that vote. This opportunity has been granted; and yet, I confess, while there is a fertility of apprehensions, no real grievance has been manifested. Our admirable and complex form of Government in all its operations has exhibited as little friction, as little of local hardship, as any ever devised by the wit of man.

It is undeniably true that, if the late election had resulted in the defeat of Mr. Lincoln, no revolution would have been precipitated, and no new guarantees to slavery would have been required at our hands. But, while we have been victorious in the campaign, we are invited to submit to what would not even have been suggested had we been defeated; and, invited to submit to what nearly two-thirds of the popular vote of the Democratic party itself rejected. For one million three hundred and sixty-five thousand nine hundred and seventy-six Democrats, in voting for Mr. Douglas, voted against the protection of slavery in the Territories; and only 847,933 for Mr. Breckinridge, in favor of it. Under these circumstances, the demand made is a humiliation to which no party can submit.

In 1820 the Missouri compromise was established, and its repeal was never agitated by the North. In 1828 John Quincy Adams was defeated on charges of extravagance, although the expenditure was not one-sixth of what we now witness; but the North submitted. In 1832 General Jackson was re-elected on the ground of hostility to the United States Bank; and when the bank went down, all acquiesced. In 1844 Mr. Polk was elected because he was in favor of "the re-annexation of Texas," and "extending the area of freedom;" and when Texas came in, with four slave States extended on its banner, even then there was no rebellion. In 1848 the Wilmot proviso was defeated; but no secession followed. In 1854 the Missouri compromise was repealed; and yet the Union stood firm, notwithstanding this combined blunder and crime. In 1860 Mr. Lincoln was elected, because he was opposed to the extension of slavery into the Territories, and opposed to the general maintenance of the Government for the last eight years. That verdict of the people cannot be reversed, except by the people themselves, four years hence. I trust it may never be reversed. Meantime it must be accepted by all order-loving, Constitution-obeying men. If the South did not mean to abide by the result—only on the principle of "heads I win, tails you lose"—they should not have courted the issue, nor made the appeal to the ballot-box. Having participated in the election, it is too late to reject the verdict. They will find consolation in the best of books, "The patient abiding of the right, shall be turned to gladness."

Whatever fate may befall our country, the Democratic party has much to do to redeem itself from the odium of the present crisis, and I would urge it to that patriotic end. A Democratic President has not used his high prerogative to stop the dismemberment of the Republic, but only to license anarchy. He has looked benignly on secession. Like a clever old man with unruly sons, he has deprecated their conduct by saying "Don't; but if I were you I would, and I can't stop it if you do." It is not a difficult feat for the officers and crew to scuttle and sink the staunchest of ships; and any government may go down when its own officers betray their trust, or lapse into corruption and imbecility. The names of those now or recently in command, will have a page not to be envied in future history. Nor will it be long sight of that secession was legitimized and nursed by the wolves of the Democratic party. The true men of this party must now take care of their own reputation.

Mr. Speaker, not having been able to coincide with the honorable chairman, who

presented the majority of the committee of thirty-three, nor yet altogether with the views of any of the minority reports, I feel it to be my duty to take this method of explaining what, in my judgment, should be done, and what should not be done, with the various subjects upon which we shall soon be called upon to act.

And first let me say, that the course of those occupying extreme positions in the South, before and especially since our assembling here, has made it embarrassing for me or any of us who would preserve the Constitution in all its vigor, to listen even to words of conciliation; while anything like compromise has never been possible for a moment. Compromises are under the ban of all parties, and to the advocates of secession, who mean revolution, more odious than any other. If any State or States may withdraw their Senators and Representatives, seize forts, ships, arsenals, mints, hospitals, and dock-yards, wherever an election terminates adversely to their political opinions, and then demand terms—fundamental changes of organic laws—before they will return to their allegiance, what is our Constitution, with all its historic splendor, worth? Should such a course obtain the sanction of serious concessions, the national Government would be forever destroyed, and each member of the family, as they acquired strength and mettle for disobedience, might in turn defy the law and order of the paternal roof unless some portion of authority was abdicated, and some portion of the estate was set apart for exclusive enjoyment. I will do nothing to commit our Republic to this crumbling process of mutiny and decay; I will do nothing to admit the doctrine of secession as the extreme medicine of the Constitution. No one who desires the continuance of the Union should consent to put it in a position of mere sufferance—tenant at will—of one State, nor even a dozen States. Self-preservation forbids that our system should be inoculated with any such virus. If the seceding States desire to quit the Union, and to quit it forever, let them propose constitutional amendments for that purpose, and calmly submit them to the people. This is the only mode by which the end aimed at can be reached without civil war, and the utter demoralization of all the parties who choose to maintain the present Constitution.

I know that the existence of a party, as compared with the existence of the Union, is a matter of utter insignificance. But, at this time, there is but one party which can be relied upon as an entirety, and in all its integrity, in favor of the Union and the Constitution as it is. If this party falls in its duty, or lacks the courage equal to its mission, either the Union will be destroyed, or the Constitution will be so changed that it might cost less to abandon our inheritance than incurred to support it. Union men, in whatever party now to be found, should acknowledge the necessity, and unite with us in rescuing the Government from its present dangers; and when we reach calmer seas we shall have ample time to fight about political differences as practical issues arise. Whether Representatives here show that patriotism or not, I feel sure the people will rally under no other banner than the "stars and stripes."

For one, I cannot make what appears to me to be concessions, nor consent to any measure that shall lower the moral and political standard of the great majority in the North. The South shall have all its rights; but I am commissioned to surrender none. When the principles upon which I was elected a member of this House shall become dangerous to the country I shall deem it my duty to resign and go home; but while I believe them vital to its preservation, they will continue to be asserted. Measures intended for humiliation, forcing the majority to capitulate to the minority, will have no countenance from me. But, outside of this, being victors, we can afford to be frank and magnanimous, and say what we mean. Rather, we cannot afford anything less. If some future republican traveler from Naples or St. Petersburg shall ever come here to sketch the ruins of this temple of liberty, let him have no date to note that it was shattered by mere perversity of temper. Let the rock upon which we split—slavery extension—and no other, be marked on the map. The assailants of the Union are now in the wrong, and we must keep them so. I will not shut my eyes to the fact that several States, with apparent and sudden sanction of their people, have started to leave us, with the intent never to return. Other fixed stars of the Republic, with few of change, are perplexing the world. What I can properly do to restore harmony, although it may prove fruitless, I shall try. I will deal in truth, frankness, and conciliation; and shall favor such measures as will not compromise, in my judgment, the great principles of human liberty upon which our Government was established—if such shall be accepted as an adjustment of present difficulties. Whatever I might do under ordinary circumstances, neither more nor less, I shall feel it incumbent upon me to do now. To the people of the South our party has been most pertinaciously misrepresented; I am now writing to tell them that we intend them no harm; that Jefferson and Jackson were not dangerous, their apprehensions are unfounded as to Mr. Lincoln, and, therefore, willing to give a congressional certificate that we have been slandered; that the Republican party of to-day is no blacker than the R-publican party of forty, twenty, or thirty years in secession, found in Virginia successful candidates for the Presidency; and that Mr. Hamlin is as immaculately white as the gentleman from Ohio. [Government Corwin.] I feel sure the southern people, goaded by calumnious oratory, have made a suicidal plunge; and I would give time for sober truth to rise and reassert its empire. Not standing on the soulless puntello, that they ought to have known better than to have leaped into such turbid and bottomless waters, let us fling them to the shore. If they can have a chance to return by their own volition, it will cost less to plunge in after them, and they will be better associates in all time to come.

It is not to those States now in armed revolt that I would offer the word "comet"; for they are not entitled even to an explanation to save them from suicide. They have not asked it; they have appealed to no tribunal save that of force. But the border States have, as yet, done nothing to earn hate something rather to elicit praise; and to them, made glorious by ancestral renown, and by a common fame, precious by holding the ashes of heroes and statesmen whom we have loved with that wonderful love, "passing the love of women," to them let us give assurances of a faithful redemption of all the obligations imposed upon us by the Constitution we have sworn to support, and that fraternal sympathy that shall leave them no excuse for seeking a foreign home. Among the resolutions reported by the committee, not all of which received my assent, there was one—

"That the several States be respectfully requested to cause their statutes to be revised, with a view to ascertain if any of them are in conflict with, or tend to embarrass or hinder the execution of the laws of the United States."

To which I did assent, because it is respectful in its tone, pertinent to States South as well as North; and because my own State had already ordered precisely this thing to be done before we assembled here. Moved by her own sense of propriety, Vermont will, in her own good time, do whatsoever is right—because it is right. I have not given critical attention to what are called personal liberty bills, for none of them, nor anything else, has prevented the execution of the fugitive slave law, though repugnant to a large share of the legal and moral sense of the country, which the President says has been executed in every contested case. That cannot be said of the neutrality laws to prevent filibustering, nor of the laws for the suppression of the African slave trade.

So far as the legislation of Vermont is concerned, I think it has been intended to maintain her reputation as the purest democracy in the world, the very sanctuary of liberty, and to throw around all her inhabitants, however humble, the safeguards of the writ of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, as well as to prevent the nefarious crime of kidnapping from being committed within her borders.

Such laws as these are common, and ought to be, to all the States. They are merely legislative authority to enforce a bill of rights, "dear to freemen and formidable to tyrants only," and stand, as the flaming sword to defend the rights of men, as recognized in all our republican constitutions, whenever they shall be assailed.

By the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *Prigg vs. Pennsylvania*, which subsequent events have rendered historical, it was decided that the master could seize his slave as any other property, wherever found, if there was no State law against it. Much of the legislation complained of was therefore set in motion, to compel masters to resort to United States authority, and prevent the possibility of lawless seizure of free black men. In the same case, it was decided that the legislation of Congress excludes all State legislation on the subject. Free State Legislatures, therefore, very generally prohibited their officers from aiding or assisting in such business. If this shows a lack of loyalty, it is in pursuance of this decision of the Supreme Court. It is true, also, that the laws of the fugitive slave act of 1850 multiplied and intensified such statutes. It is, however, in doing this, State Legislatures have transcended the object aimed at, and any of their statutes of the Constitution of the United States which declares, that "no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law of regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor," they should be repealed without debate. It is never to be forgotten, and especially not now, that the "Constitution and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof," is "the supreme law of the land," "anything in the constitution or laws of any State the contrary notwithstanding."

One of the propositions of the committee, as offered by the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, is to provide an amendment to the Constitution which shall forbid any possible future interference with slavery in the States where it exists. Such, unquestionably, is the true meaning of the Constitution now. I know of no party having the remotest intention of giving it any other construction. The Republican party, of all others bound themselves in the most solemn form by the fourth resolution of the Chicago platform, that "the laws of the United States shall be faithfully executed," and that the maintenance of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depends; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

That is explicit, and among cool men would be so regarded. Unfortunately, all men at this time are not cool. The resolution unanimously adopted by this House on the 11th of February last is even more explicit. Every member, Republican inclusive, for once in harmony.

Resolved, That neither Congress nor the people or government of any non-slaveholding State has the constitutional right to legislate upon, or interfere with, slavery in any slaveholding State in the Union."

Surely, after this, the possibility of deception must be considered effectually throttled. Only those who desire to be cheated can be cheated. I have been unwilling to consider any amendment to the Constitution, lest a master work should be botched by journey men; and I have tolerated the idea at this point alone, not because I thought it necessary, but that, if accepted as adjustment of present difficulties, it might, by perpetuating a part of our present Constitution—re-enacting it, if you please—perpetuate the whole. But I have, as yet, had no assurances that it will be taken in any larger sense than "good so far as it goes." To secure my support, it must be taken as a full and final settlement. To that end, guarantees against the heresies of secession would be indispensable.

I know of no one who claims, or desires the constitutional power to interfere with the domestic institutions of any State. Whenever the affirmative of that doctrine shall be maintained, it will be in some remote age, when all State rights shall have become extinct, and the spirit of the people so tamed as to be ready to submit to imperial despotism. Then the Federal Government may as easily establish slavery in a free State as to abolish it in a slave State.

The particular form which this proposition has assumed appears to me objectionable, and unnecessarily complicated; and all that part which makes a discrimination between the States should be stricken out. But, if the substance of such a declaration could serve the great purpose of conciliation in the present exigencies of the country, I would give it my assent. We are either in favor of ultimate interference with slavery in the States where it exists, or we are against it. Now, if against it, though we may consider it surplage—why may we not put the subject beyond even the power of wilful misrepresentation? As a mere matter of taste, I would not vote for it; but I would be willing to sacrifice taste for the Union. The proof is abundant that southern men have indulged, and do indulge, in serious charges, if not real apprehensions, on this point; and if the measures proposed would carry healing on its wings, it appears to me to be one that may be tendered without sacrifice. I pre-

sented the majority of the committee of thirty-three, nor yet altogether with the views of any of the minority reports, I feel it to be my duty to take this method of explaining what, in my judgment, should be done, and what should not be done, with the various subjects upon which we shall soon be called upon to act.

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For one, I cannot make what appears to me to be concessions, nor consent to any measure that shall lower the moral and political standard of the great majority in the North. The South shall have all its rights; but I am commissioned to surrender none. When the principles upon which I was elected a member of this House shall become dangerous to the country I shall deem it my duty to resign and go home; but while I believe them vital to its preservation, they will continue to be asserted. Measures intended for humiliation, forcing the majority to capitulate to the minority, will have no countenance from me. But, outside of this, being victors, we can afford to be frank and magnanimous, and say what we mean. Rather, we cannot afford anything less. If some future republican traveler from Naples or St. Petersburg shall ever come here to sketch the ruins of this temple of liberty, let him have no date to note that it was shattered by mere perversity of temper. Let the rock upon which we split—slavery extension—and no other, be marked on the map. The assailants of the Union are now in the wrong, and we must keep them so. I will not shut my eyes to the fact that several States, with apparent and sudden sanction of their people, have started to leave us, with the intent never to return. Other fixed stars of the Republic, with few of change, are perplexing the world. What I can properly do to restore harmony, although it may prove fruitless, I shall try. I will deal in truth, frankness, and conciliation; and shall favor such measures as will not compromise, in my judgment, the great principles of human liberty upon which our Government was established—if such shall be accepted as an adjustment of present difficulties. Whatever I might do under ordinary circumstances, neither more nor less, I shall feel it incumbent upon me to do now. To the people of the South our party has been most pertinaciously misrepresented; I am now writing to tell them that we intend them no harm; that Jefferson and Jackson were not dangerous, their apprehensions are unfounded as to Mr. Lincoln, and, therefore, willing to give a congressional certificate that we have been slandered; that the Republican party of to-day is no blacker than the R-publican party of forty, twenty, or thirty years in secession, found in Virginia successful candidates for the Presidency; and that Mr. Hamlin is as immaculately white as the gentleman from Ohio. [Government Corwin.] I feel sure the southern people, goaded by calumnious oratory, have made a suicidal plunge; and I would give time for sober truth to rise and reassert its empire. Not standing on the soulless puntello, that they ought to have known better than to have leaped into such turbid and bottomless waters, let us fling them to the shore. If they can have a chance to return by their own volition, it will cost less to plunge in after them, and they will be better associates in all time to come.

It is not to those States now in armed revolt that I would offer the word "comet"; for they are not entitled even to an explanation to save them from suicide. They have not asked it; they have appealed to no tribunal save that of force. But the border States have, as yet, done nothing to earn hate something rather to elicit praise; and to them, made glorious by ancestral renown, and by a common fame, precious by holding the ashes of heroes and statesmen whom we have loved with that wonderful love, "passing the love of women," to them let us give assurances of a faithful redemption of all the obligations imposed upon us by the Constitution we have sworn to support, and that fraternal sympathy that shall leave them no excuse for seeking a foreign home. Among the resolutions reported by the committee, not all of which received my assent, there was one—

"That the several States be respectfully requested to cause their statutes to be revised, with a view to ascertain if any of them are in conflict with, or tend to embarrass or hinder the execution of the laws of the United States."

To which I did assent, because it is respectful in its tone, pertinent to States South as well as North; and because my own State had already ordered precisely this thing to be done before we assembled here. Moved by her own sense of propriety, Vermont will, in her own good time, do whatsoever is right—because it is right. I have not given critical attention to what are called personal liberty bills, for none of them, nor anything else, has prevented the execution of the fugitive slave law, though repugnant to a large share of the legal and moral sense of the country, which the President says has been executed in every contested case. That cannot be said of the neutrality laws to prevent filibustering, nor of the laws for the suppression of the African slave trade.

So far as the legislation of Vermont is concerned, I think it has been intended to maintain her reputation as the purest democracy in the world, the very sanctuary of liberty, and to throw around all her inhabitants, however humble, the safeguards of the writ of *habeas corpus* and trial by jury, as well as to prevent the nefarious crime of kidnapping from being committed within her borders.

Such laws as these are common, and ought to be, to all the States. They are merely legislative authority to enforce a bill of rights, "dear to freemen and formidable to tyrants only," and stand, as the flaming sword to defend the rights of men, as recognized in all our republican constitutions, whenever they shall be assailed.

By the decision of the Supreme Court in the case of *Prigg vs. Pennsylvania*, which subsequent events have rendered historical, it was decided that the master could seize his slave as any other property, wherever found, if there was no State law against it. Much of the legislation complained of was therefore set in motion, to compel masters to resort to United States authority, and prevent the possibility of lawless seizure of free black men. In the same case, it was decided that the legislation of Congress excludes all State legislation on the subject. Free State Legislatures, therefore, very generally prohibited their officers from aiding or assisting in such business. If this shows a lack of loyalty, it is in pursuance of this decision of the Supreme Court. It is true, also, that the laws of the fugitive slave act of 1850 multiplied and intensified such statutes. It is, however, in doing this, State Legislatures have transcended the object aimed at, and any of their statutes of the Constitution of the United States which declares, that "no person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law of regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor," they should be repealed without debate. It is never to be forgotten, and especially not now, that the "Constitution and the laws of the United States, which shall be made in pursuance thereof," is "the supreme law of the land," "anything in the constitution or laws of any State the contrary notwithstanding."

One of the propositions of the committee, as offered by the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, is to provide an amendment to the Constitution which shall forbid any possible future interference with slavery in the States where it exists. Such, unquestionably, is the true meaning of the Constitution now. I know of no party having the remotest intention of giving it any other construction. The Republican party, of all others bound themselves in the most solemn form by the fourth resolution of the Chicago platform, that "the laws of the United States shall be faithfully executed," and that the maintenance of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depends; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

That is explicit, and among cool men would be so regarded. Unfortunately, all men at this time are not cool. The resolution unanimously adopted by this House on the 11th of February last is even more explicit. Every member, Republican inclusive, for once in harmony.

Resolved, That neither Congress nor the people or government of any non-slaveholding State has the constitutional right to legislate upon, or interfere with, slavery in any slaveholding State in the Union."

Surely, after this, the possibility of deception must be considered effectually throttled. Only those who desire to be cheated can be cheated. I have been unwilling to consider any amendment to the Constitution, lest a master work should be botched by journey men; and I have tolerated the idea at this point alone, not because I thought it necessary, but that, if accepted as adjustment of present difficulties, it might, by perpetuating a part of our present Constitution—re-enacting it, if you please—perpetuate the whole. But I have, as yet, had no assurances that it will be taken in any larger sense than "good so far as it goes." To secure my support, it must be taken as a full and final settlement. To that end, guarantees against the heresies of secession would be indispensable.

I know of no one who claims, or desires the constitutional power to interfere with the domestic institutions of any State. Whenever the affirmative of that doctrine shall be maintained, it will be in some remote age, when all State rights shall have become extinct, and the spirit of the people so tamed as to be ready to submit to imperial despotism. Then the Federal Government may as easily establish slavery in a free State as to abolish it in a slave State.

The particular form which this proposition has assumed appears to me objectionable, and unnecessarily complicated; and all that part which makes a discrimination between the States should be stricken out. But, if the substance of such a declaration could serve the great purpose of conciliation in the present exigencies of the country, I would give it my assent. We are either in favor of ultimate interference with slavery in the States where it exists, or we are against it. Now, if against it, though we may consider it surplage—why may we not put the subject beyond even the power of wilful misrepresentation? As a mere matter of taste, I would not vote for it; but I would be willing to sacrifice taste for the Union. The proof is abundant that southern men have indulged, and do indulge, in serious charges, if not real apprehensions, on this point; and if the measures proposed would carry healing on its wings, it appears to me to be one that may be tendered without sacrifice. I pre-

sented the majority of the committee of thirty-three, nor yet altogether with the views of any of the minority reports, I feel it to be my duty to take this method of explaining what, in my judgment, should be done, and what should not be done, with the various subjects upon which we shall soon be called upon to act.

And first let me say, that the course of those occupying extreme positions in the South, before and especially since our assembling here, has made it embarrassing for me or any of us who would preserve the Constitution in all its vigor, to listen even to words of conciliation; while anything like compromise has never been possible for a moment. Compromises are under the ban of all parties, and to the advocates of secession, who mean revolution, more odious than any other. If any State or States may withdraw their Senators and Representatives, seize forts, ships, arsenals, mints, hospitals, and dock-yards, wherever an election terminates adversely to their political opinions, and then demand terms—fundamental changes of organic laws—before they will return to their allegiance, what is our Constitution, with all its historic splendor, worth? Should such a course obtain the sanction of serious concessions, the national Government would be forever destroyed, and each member of the family, as they acquired strength and mettle for disobedience, might in turn defy the law and order of the paternal roof unless some portion of authority was abdicated, and some portion of the estate was set apart for exclusive enjoyment. I will do nothing to commit our Republic to this crumbling process of mutiny and decay; I will do nothing to admit the doctrine of secession as the extreme medicine of the Constitution. No one who desires the continuance of the Union should consent to put it in a position of mere sufferance—tenant at will—of one State, nor even a dozen States. Self-preservation forbids that our system should be inoculated with any such virus. If the seceding States desire to quit the Union, and to quit it forever, let them propose constitutional amendments for that purpose, and calmly submit them to the people. This is the only mode by which the end aimed at can be reached without civil war, and the utter demoralization of all the parties who choose to maintain the present Constitution.

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